

Title	New Malaysia in the Making: Interethnic and Inter-regional Challenges in Fostering National Unity
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Executive summary

The 14th general elections held in May 2018 had led to the historic end of the six-decade-old Barisan Nasional-led federal government which had been in place since independence. The height of expectations for political reform and the fulfillment of electoral promises was comparable with the enormity of the tasks at hand to bring about social changes, resulting in the euphoric atmosphere being replaced within a few months with disappointment and dismay. This is in part due to the unrealistic promises that have been made by the Pakatan Harapan in their electoral manifesto, as well as to the inexperience and mishandling of issues by some of the ministers on specific issues. Within less than six months, the country has seen massive Malay demonstrations as well as rioting of the Hindus over the fear of demolition of a Hindu temple. The Malay-dominated opposition parties have a field day bolstering their ethnic and religious credentials taking advantage of the interethnic contradictions and mistrust. The review process of the 1963 Malaysia Agreement is also ongoing between Putrajaya and the East Malaysian states in a bid to pacify discontentment and heightened regional identities.

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